

## GORE GAZETTE

FREE Your Bi-Weekly Guide To Horror, Exploitation And Gore In The N.Y. Metro Area No. 21

## MICHAEL WADLEIGH: THE WEREWOLF OF WOODSTOCK

After over a decade hiatus from contemporary "big bucks" American cinema, Michael Wadleigh has returned to the major release fold with *Wolfen*, a pseudo-werewolf horror epic which opened to area theaters last Friday. Old wavers no doubt will fondly remember Wadleigh's last film of 11 years ago: *Woodstock*, the three hour documentary extravaganza which chronicled the revered music festival and made millions of dollars for nearly everyone involved. What may have been forgotten, however, was that in bringing the festival to the screen, Wadleigh employed a number of then-unused technical and camera effects (i.e., split-screen images, incongruous editing juxtaposition, etc.) that have since become mainstays of modern filmmaking, used extensively even today by directors like De Palma, Coppola, etc. (I always argued that Brian's *Sisters* was more a *Woodstock* imitation than a Hitchcock ripoff...) Anyway, after all these years, Michael proves that he is still quite the innovator with *Wolfen*; developing a new type of infra-red filming technique which blends photographic and electronic images with computerized optical processing to let us see the world from the point of view of the wolves themselves, similar in execution to Jack Arnold's old 1953 classic, *It Came From Outer Space*, but light years ahead in its seriousness and overall shock effect. *Wolfen* is concerned with a series of graphic mutilation murders that take place in the South Bronx and a similar slaughter perpetrated by a gubernatorial candidate and his wife in Battery Park. NY homicide detective Dewey Wilson (played with a faltering city accent by Britisher Bert Finney) draws parallels between the strings of killings and begins to suspect they are the work of a group of disgruntled American Indians, who, still angry over losing Manhattan at 324, practice "shape-shifting" at night, turning into various animals to get revenge on the slobs who despoiled their land. Through tracking the Indians, Finney discovers that it's not the Redskins but a super-intelligent pack of wolves living within NY city that are preying on derelicts and other ghetto have-nots because they realize no one will miss them. He also finds that the attack on the candidate was a warning from the pack, as the politico was in favor of some urban renewal legislation that would have disturbed the wolves lair. Of course, Finney has had a past track record of alcohol and mental problems, so he is extremely unsure of how to approach his superiors with his unique discovery. He isn't kept wondering about his approach



PAULINE VANDERKIEER LIES DEAD IN BATTERY PARK, HER THROAT RIPPED OUT AND CHEST SHREDDED BY AN IRATE MICHAEL WADLEIGH AFTER SHE CONFESSED THAT SHE ENJOYED THE HOWLING MORE THAN WOLFEN.

for too long, however, as the pack decides to confront him and a handful of NY's finest for a showdown in the flick's finale.... *Wolfen* is a finely crafted, fairly suspenseful film that makes excellent use of the aforementioned photographic effects gimmicks and has enough gore sequences to satiate the appetites of the meat-hungry masses. Expertly handled by Carl Fullerton, (whose gore effects on *Friday The 13th, Part 2*, reportedly magnificent, were all left on the cutting room floor due to MPAA dictates) we are treated to a good number of ripped off hands, slashed throats, a severed head, and a disturbingly sick autopsy scene in a NY morgue, all displayed in a forthright, graphic manner that leads me to believe that Tom Savini might soon have some strong competition. The *Wolfen* screenplay is tautly written by Wadleigh himself and contains large dashes of graveyard humor hilariously provided by Gregory Hines as a smart-assed medical examiner to lighten what could easily have become a heavy-handed, ponderously dull storyline. My only real complaint with the film is that with a running time of nearly two hours, I became a bit impatient to learn the secret of the origin of the wolves. When I finally got to see them (with only 20 minutes left until the ending) and discovered them to be only normal-looking wolves, I felt slighted. Perhaps I was spoiled by the excellent creatures created for *The Howling*, but a bunch of overgrown, big-fanged dogs really didn't cut it for me. But maybe comparisons of *Wolfen* to *The Howling* and other

licks of the werewolf genre is inequitable- the lack itself are not werewolves and the film itself bears a closer kinship with The Manitou and The Prophecy than any releases of lycanthrope ilk... Wolfen is worth catching for both the great gore of Fullerton and the astounding pyrotechnics of Madleigh. Hopefully, he won't take another 10 years to make his next groundbreaking film.

#### OBITUARY - RIP PSYCHOTRONIC

TV addicts/movie fans in the NY metropolitan area will be dismayed to hear that Psychotronic, the year-old weekly guide to horror, classics, exploitation and weirdness on local television has ceased publication as of mid-July. Editor/publisher Michael Weldon, to whom Psychotronic was a weekly labor of love, cited "a general lack of enough money" as the major factor behind the publication's demise. To the uninitiated, Psychotronic was a nine-page listing of selected films/TV shows shown on NY VHF television stations, complete with capsule reviews of all horror/gore and genre-related films and was profusely illustrated with rare stills and old movie ad matter. aptly described as "a kind of sick TV Guide", the publication had recently made the jump from its initial Xerox-stapled format to a slicker, tabloid style and seemed finally on the verge of reaching the wider audience it so richly deserved when the cash stopped flowing... Don't expect Weldon to become a forgotten cult hero, however- he already has plans afoot for a book to be published which he informs us will be a guide to low-budget films on TV, as well as long range goals for a possible Psychotronic resurrection in the not-too-distant future if the proper financing could be arranged. The G.C. wishes Michael the best of luck in all future endeavors and offers sincere condolences on the death of his boy- it was the twisted spirit of publications like his and the Sleazoid Express that sowed the seeds of ideas that eventually mutated into what you are now holding in your hands. If you loved Psychotronic as much as I did, drop Michael at the (341 E. 9th St., Apt. 12, New York, N.Y., 1003). Sometimes a small bit of thoughtful encouragement can be worth more than a dozen subscription checks...

#### BACK ISSUES

Throughout the past few weeks, the G.C. has been inundated with mail requests for back issues. As much as I'd like to be able to accommodate every request, G.C.s are published at an extremely limited run, with the originals being taken apart after every printing. Because of this fact, all back issue supplies are very low, with a couple

of the earlier editions rapidly approaching "out of print" status. I am thus forced to charge 50c for all back issues from now on (including postage). Make checks payable to Rick Sullivan, 73 N. Pullerton Ave., Montclair, N.J. 07042. Beat the cost of back issues- get every new issue of the G.C. for free as it is published. You can write for a listing of distribution spots in the NY/NJ metropolitan area.

#### A BLOW OUT, INDEED!

Brian DePalma's latest thriller, Blow Out continues to trace the director's downward spiral in both the originality and interest areas of his filmmaking. Often cited for blatantly stealing from Alfred Hitchcock, De Palma has now turned his plagiaristic paws on both Michaelangelo Antonioni and Francis Ford Coppola, resulting in a film that emerges as an unrealistic, convoluted cross between Blow Up (1967) and The Conversation (1974). John Travolta is a sound effects technician for low-budget horror films who accidentally records a political assassination late one night whilst taping howling wind and hooting owls for his latest production. He spends the balance of the flick trying to con-



JOHN TRAVOLTA DECORATES THE DASHBOARD OF HIS CAR IN THE ONLY REAL GORE SCENE IN BLOW OUT.

vince the public of the killing (all press has made it out to be an accidental death) via the aid of the abominable Nancy Allen, who in her villainous recurring role as call girl/hooker, was in the company of the candidate when his car tires were shot out. Blow Out should be of virtually no interest to G.C. readers, since aside from a demented psycho goralelessly garroting a few whores, the film has no real link with the horror/exploitation genre. Even taken as an adventure/suspense epic, Blow Out is still a flat tire, with gaping holes in story credibility and characterizations. Interesting note: Perhaps DePalma is trying to be subtly symbolic- this, the second Travolta/Allen team-up is called Blow Out, and the first time the pair acted together (in Brian's Carrie). It was over a blow job. Makes you wonder...